



Report: Western Cape Food Forum

20 May 2021

1. Introduction

The Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) convened a Zoom call on 20 May 2021. The chairperson, Andrew Borraine, noted the exciting number of food and nutrition system activities, including grassroots networks, NGO projects, community-based and academic research and knowledge-sharing activities and communities of practice, work on informal trade governance, the emergence of local food and farming partnerships, a growing interest in technology and innovation,, and the role of technology innovators, through competitions and challenges, and the emergence of social enterprises in food manufacturing and processing to increase nutritional value of affordable food. Both the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Government (WCG) have established transversal food working groups and have indicated a willingness to work closely with non-state actors.

He noted however that the struggle to feed people in poor and vulnerable communities continues as many food-relief schemes have limited financial and human resources and quoted from a letter written by Bernadette Samuels of the Delft Action Network about the struggles that they were facing. A lot of food schemes will also be affected by the decision made by Flash to unilaterally stop providing digital vouchers, including DGMT/ EDP, and VPUU. The chairperson reported that an alternative voucher system is being explored urgently. He commended efforts by the Gugulethu and Sea Point CANs who have launched an [emergency donation drive](#) to ensure daily food security for 3200 vulnerable people through 14 community kitchens.

The chairperson reported to the forum on behalf of the City of Cape Town's Urban Management Department that a report for a further R15 million food relief was adopted by MAYCO on the 19 May 2021. It is envisaged that the report will be approved in the next Council and funds will be disbursed thereafter by the first week of June. In total, 18 NGOs passed the screening phase and will participate in the scheme.

2. Civil Society Organisation mobilisation around food aid during Covid: Research Feedback meeting

The Centre of Excellence in Food Security conducted research on the role of civil society organisations (CSO) in mobilizing around food aid during Covid. Extensive interviews were conducted with various stakeholders, particularly CSOs, as part of the research. On the 11th of May, the Centre of excellence in Food Security convened a feedback meeting with CSOs. Camilla Adelle presented to the Forum a summary of the draft research findings, recommendations, and as well as key points that emerged from the discussion held on the 11th of May, [see attached presentation](#) by Camilla Adelle. She added that the findings are well known in the CSO community and that the report aims to build towards a body of knowledge that drives change that supports and highlights the role played by CSOs.

Camilla reported to the Forum that a key theme emerging is around the need to building better relationships with government. Many CSOs felt that they were left 'holding the line' with little or no contact with government. There is also a perception that parts of government do not listen to CSOs. In addition to this challenge, red tape was identified as a huge barrier for CSOs trying to access government funding. The relationship between CSOs and government is not uniform. In dealing with government and the red-tape, the report found that some larger CSOs have good relationships with parts of government.

Recommendations from the report include the need for all spheres of government to acknowledge the important role that CSOs play in providing emergency food aid. In addition, the report recommends the need for investment to prioritize the development and strengthening of social infrastructure in between times of crises (especially in communities). Lastly, that sustained funding is needed to support CSOs to perform their full range of potential functions, not just for service delivery.



Figure 1: Multiples roles that civil society organisations can play in the food system - see Camilla's presentation attached

Forum members agreed with the initial findings and recommendations presented. In addition, they provided the following input:

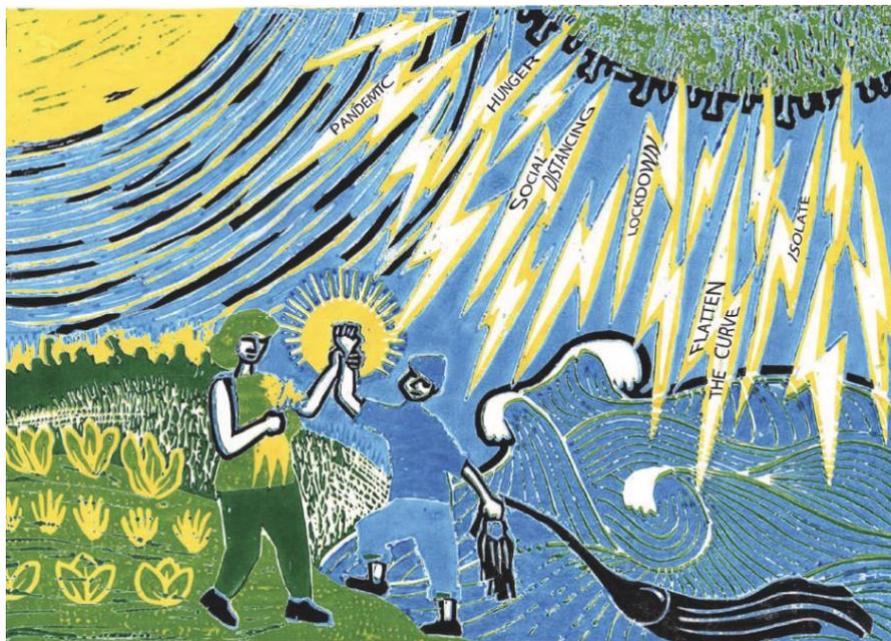
- Appreciation for the kind of research that bring to light the role played by CSOs around food aid.
- There is a need raise awareness around the work of CSOs through media and panel discussions to strengthen advocacy and policy change.
- The need for an enabling environment was highlighted as a key factor for Early Childhood Development (ECDs) as well as food relief and the transition to food security.
- Research also helps CSOs feel that others share the same challenges.

It was agreed that the research needed to be taken to the public through media and panel discussions so as to build the awareness to strengthen advocacy and policy change, and that engagements with government should be arranged to discuss the need to create a more enabling and supportive environment.

The final report, once published, will be shared with forum members.

3. Agency in South Africa's food systems: A food justice perspective of food security in the Cape Flats and St Helena Bay during the Covid-19 pandemic

The Centre for Rural Development, Berlin, with local community-based researchers (Weskusmandjie and Cape Town Urban Co-Research Farmer Group) supported by Heinrich Boell Foundation South Africa, Solidaridad Southern Africa, and INKOTA netzwerk e.V., have recently published a report on [Agency in South Africa's food systems: A food justice perspective of food security in the Cape Flats and St Helena Bay during the Covid-19 pandemic](#). Nomonde Buthelezi, research coordinator of the project, provided a high-level summary of the research and well as key areas to inform next steps.



Nomonde reported that data was collected through surveys with community members of the Cape Flats and St Helena Bay. The data collection was conducted at start of lock down, a period where there was a great deal of frustration around food aid and lack of support from government. Key findings of the research indicate that:

- Hunger is associated with shame and can be easily hidden.
- This leads to limited understanding of food insecurity, particularly the depth to which it affects communities.
- Because food hunger is often hidden, required advocacy efforts are limited as there is a lack of awareness and supporting evidence as compared to HIV& AIDS and gender-based violence.
- A great deal of food insecurity awareness is required to bring associated challenges to light.

Nomonde added that the next phase of the project aims at focussing on community kitchens, commonly known as 'soup' kitchens. The goal is to rethink the concept of community kitchen models and to integrate with other issues faced by communities. Currently, community gardens are the central places for connecting. This would see community kitchens as central places and not just a food distribution space. Organised dialogues could potentially be part of the community kitchen's agenda.

Nomonde highlighted that there is indeed an urgent need for community-led dialogues on food insecurity. Although Covid-19 resulted in the emergence of food dialogues, the voice of those directly affected continues to be missing. A consequence of this dynamic is the disconnection between the data and the reality/understanding of those affected by food insecurity. She added that government is not able to reach sufficient people at community level.

Feedback from the Forum:

- The chairperson opened the floor by noting that the findings of this report are similar to Camilla's report- doing development differently. He added that there is a need to draw a direct connect between the two reports.
- Forum members noted that they share Nomonde's concerns on the lack of representation in food dialogues/ discussions.
- Forums are not accessible for the very people that experience the problem that people in the room seek to address.
- Forum members such as the Food Governance Community of Practice welcomed the initiative to take these discussions into communities. Noting that it is important to also feed in these community level discussions with the wider forums and vice versa.
- One of the roles of CSOs is to connect government and others to civil society. It is crucial that CSOs are represented and vocal in all of these discussion forums.
- There's also the issue of building relationships between food aid providers/NGOs and communities. Research conducted by Haidee Swanby and colleagues related to human dignity in Covid shows that there is a wish to move from charity to solidarity and a recognition of structural injustice power imbalances.

Nomonde also took the opportunity to report on the challenges she faces in benefiting from urban agriculture vouchers. As an organic food grower, she indicated that the voucher is limiting in terms of what products can be purchased and is not inclusive of the needs of organic producers.

In responding to Nomonde's point, Dr. Sebopetsa Mogale, who is the Head of Western Cape Agriculture, asked Nomonde to contact him at mogales@elsenburg.com so as to follow-up on the matter. He also indicated the voucher project is driven by national government and that it is possible to connect Nomonde to the right colleagues driving the project at national level.

4. WCG Nourish to Flourish (N2F) Programme: Strengthening local food systems - Tristan Görgens, Department of the Premier

The chairperson, who also plays a role in supporting the coordination of the WCG N2F Programme, provided an update on the direction of the programme. He reported that the N2F part of WCG Wellbeing Cluster approach:

- Has a strong foundation: Early Childhood Centres, first 1000 days (life course approach), under 5 acute malnutrition
- Aims to increased wellbeing: After school and youth programmes, education
- Aims to meet basic needs: basic services, shelter, food, GBV shelters
- Aims to building social cohesion: youth and training, sport, community organisations

The N2F food and nutrition systems approach entails the need to identify **systemic drivers** of food insecurity. Systems approach helps everyone see their role in the food and nutrition system, beyond institutional functions and mandates. But, if everything is connected to everything else, the key question often remains around where we start. Systems thinking can be overwhelming and demobilizing and can remain at level of abstraction.

WCG N2F will therefore focus the programme for the first year in three ways:

- N2F focus #1: **Themes**
 - Improved nutrition in children under five.
 - Local food and farming ecosystems.
 - Data, evidence, mapping, research for improved decision-making.
- N2F focus #2: **Areas/ localities (place-based approach)**. The sites include metro and non-metro localities. The goal is for government to come to grip with what is going on in the different areas. Initial three areas:
 - Langa,
 - Worcester,
 - Knysna

The goal is to develop food and nutrition systems local governance model that can be replicated more widely. To this end, shared learning will also continue to take place via the Food Forum with all emerging local food and nutrition partnership sites.

- N2F focus #3: **Approach**. Support and enable existing public sector, private sector, CSO, donor and applied research processes and initiatives on the ground. Government does not intend to come in with its own projects but rather is interested on what could be done to improve what is already happened and what lessons could be drawn for the local area.

Feedback from the Forum:

- Dr Sebopetsa Mogale, who is convening the WCG N2F programme added that the approach used will enable government to learn from CSOs in terms of what is working, connect the gaps from government's side, and strengthen the overall food system.

- Forum member enquired as to whether the programme will be connecting to the provinces Hotspot teams and how can local initiatives better connect with Hotspot teams in other regions. In response, Dr. Mogale reported that Hotspot structures have been established across the Western Cape Province. The N2F Programme will connect to the existing structures instead of starting from scratch and duplicating processes. Tristan Görgens reported that there has been a re-engagement on the hotspot structure as they are seen to be key for rolling out the vaccination programme.
 - Action item: Tristan Görgens to share details of the Hotspot structure and contact details of coordinators with the forum members.

5. Update from Food Forum Working Groups

a. Enabling urban agriculture working group

Erica Inches, on behalf of the enabling agriculture working group provided feedback on the group's recent activities around the composting week. She reported that during the composting week, the following activities took place:

- Cape Town Together Food Growers Initiative (CTTFGI)
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u_21ynNWPJhTVNBBLyCeedaIbBL6WDwc/view?usp=sharing
- CTT Food Grower's Initiative presents the COMPOSTING SERIES:
 - Composting on a Zero Budget Intro: https://youtu.be/d6jBJ_EC390
 - "Speed dating" Cape Town's Solutions: <https://youtu.be/f6kTyH1az0g>
 - Vermicomposting: <https://youtu.be/19Hn7LR0JWc>
 - Aerated Static Pile Composting: <https://youtu.be/yGqQ-AFY9IU>
 - Best Practices for community composting: <https://youtu.be/uvXy5qCNjjs>

She concluded by noting that there are great initiatives happening within the civil society community and that it is important to keep it local and regenerate waste. Lastly, she announced that the next event for the working group will be on 5 June.

Comments from the Forum:

Members thanked Erica for providing an update and congratulated the team on their activities.

b. Data working group

Claire McGuinness provided a report back on behalf of the data working group. She informed the Forum that the data group met initially in the previous week. This was an introductory meeting to launch the working group. Going forward, the group noted that there is a need to identify more people interested in the data component and to make connections to the work that has already been done. Claire announced to the Forum that there will be a follow-up meeting in the following next and opened up the invitation for interested Forum members. In closing, she highlighted the important role played by the availability of the correct data in improving the food systems.

Comments for the Forum:

- The chairperson indicated to Claire that he would connect this working group to the CoCT data team.

- Florian from the Centre of Excellence in Food reported that the WC social development is also working on vulnerability indices and mapping.
- There are a number of existing data projects, such as the Helderberg data mapping group, which the team needs to link with.

c. *Quarterly Strategic planning for working groups*

Amanda Gcanga reported that the EDP will be carrying out a quarterly strategic planning session with the working groups. This forms part of the support that the EDP is providing to the Forum's working group. The purpose of these engagements is to review what is going well and what can be adapted. Amanda announced the session will take place on the **13th of July**. Further details will be communicated closer to the event.

6. Information updates and knowledge sharing

a. **Informal food trade** (important part of the food value chain)

- Florian Kroll, from the Western Cape Food Governance Community of Practice (CoP), provided feedback on the City of Cape Town: Food Traders and Food Security workshop, held on 6 May. He noted that informal trade and food relief is not a separate issue, and that CSOs should not only be engaged during the crisis. A report of the event will be made available in the CoP reports and will be presented at the Forum for a more in-depth discussion once the report is ready.
- A link to Florian's presentation, which contains links to a recording of the meeting, all the presentations, and feedback from the breakaway sessions, is available [here](#).

b. **Calls to action**

- Introduction to [Sharewaste](#). The digital app was created in Australia, and can be used to find, connect, collect, and donate waste. The purpose is described as follows: 'If you're like us, you produce awful lots of organic scraps, e.g., when cooking. Heaps of it, really. Peels, used coffee grounds... Wouldn't it be great if you could turn all that stuff into new soil rather than adding yet another pile to landfill? We think it would. And that's the idea behind ShareWaste. It helps you find someone in your neighbourhood who's willing to accept extra scraps and compost it or feed it to their worms or animals.'
- [Food Waste Innovation Challenge launches in SA](#). Ten entrepreneurs will be selected by the Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship South Africa to take part in a six-month go-to-market and investor readiness mentorship programme. Register your interest [here](#).
- Daniele Diliberto from the Ladles of Love reported on the [Realise a Dream competition](#) for young food-producing entrepreneurs. Ladles of Love has launched the Realise A Dream (RAD) competition for young food-producing entrepreneurs. Three lucky winners will receive assistance to jump start their new or existing businesses! Training, business support and capital equipment will be invested to help them

realise their dream of starting or growing a food enterprise. Young chefs, bakers and food artisans between 18-34 years old with new or existing food businesses are invited to enter now. Prizes include business and product incubation at the V&A Makers Landing, a subscription to Heavy Chefs education platform, Over The Rainbow brand identity development, PNA stationery vouchers, kitchen equipment and much more. Please note that you MUST be a South African citizen and reside in Cape Town. Enter [here](#) by 31 May 2021.

- Kevin Naidoo from SEED reported on the Inqola FEED Innovation Prize. He informed the Forum that the competition is based on a search for internet solutions for local food economies, circularity, supply chains, agroecology, capacity building. The idea comes from the recognition that there are not sufficient tech experts in the food sector. Inqola is looking at collaborative digital solutions. The reason is to attract the tech entrepreneur community to work in the food system. First prize is R100K. Closing date 25 June 2021. Enter [here](#).

c. Forthcoming events

- [ICLEI Rise Africa Urban Festival](#), May 24-28. Topics include food, water, energy, circular economy and governance.

d. Food and nutrition data

- [Synthesis Report](#) NIDS-CRAM Wave 4 results. The NIDS-CRAM Wave 4 data was collected between 2 February and 10 March 2021. This synthesis report is split into five sections (1) Vaccines (2) Schooling (3) Hunger (4) Employment (5) Early Childhood Development. The Synthesis report summarises all results, and all papers are available for download at <https://cramsurvey.org/reports/>
- [Grow Great Stunting Survey Report](#) (Worcester area), 13 May (scroll down to Articles and Reports)

e. Articles and reports

- [City of Cape Town urban agriculture programme](#)
- [Now is the time to stop looking at food as an economic asset](#). Article by Julia Munroe.
- [South Africa must ban sugary drinks sales in schools. Self-regulation is failing](#), by Agnes Erze, Prof Karen Hofman, Assoc Prof Nicola Christofides.
- [Food systems at risk – New trends and challenges](#). FAO, 2019.

7. Date of next meeting: Thursday, June 24th